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THE WEEK 475
NATION'S CAPITAL *Harry Lorin Binsse* 478
PICASSO AND THE "NORMANDIE" *M. A. Couturier* 479
THE COMING BATTLE FOR INDIA *Albert A. Brandt* 481
IN QUEST TO HAVE NOT (*Verse*) *Edwin Honig* 483
THE ADMIRAL AND THE WOODPECKER *Vincent Engels* 484
VIEWS AND REVIEWS *Michael Williams* 485
COMMUNICATIONS 486
THE STAGE *David Burnham* 487
THE SCREEN *Philip T. Hartung* 488
BOOKS OF THE WEEK 489
Westward the Course!—Poetry as a Means of Grace—The Haitian People—Briefers
THE INNER FORUM 493

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Two Politics

WHEN the currents of history seemingly outside the control of individual effort look, as now, like overwhelming torrents and like whirlpools that pull us all out of sight, it is natural to seek again how a man can still assert his humanity within himself and in his social life. It is the question of politics, and what are the duties and obligations of a conscious citizen. Jacques Maritain, once again plunging with his honesty and great powers into a real problem which is really stirring people who are alive, has contributed a brilliant paper to the current *Review of Politics:* "End of Machiavellianism." Here we will not enter the center of Maritain's discussion, but only try to find an application which some of his argument seems to us to have for THE COMMONWEAL and for most of our readers who are private citizens.

Without great violence, one can separate two kinds of politics for Maritain's analysis. The first kind most directly concerns the state: the common good of the nation and the power of government. The state and its politics are temporal, but in order to judge state policy, we must consider the historic duration of the state, which is longer than one man's life. For instance, the immediate success of Machiavellianism may be reversed over the long period—and it *tends* to long term failure. This is the politics of governmental policies, laws, administrative acts: the exercise of power in the community, etc.

In this country this politics is carried on chiefly by parties and "politicians" and pressure groups, and it requires constant practical decisions on what action is good or bad for the situation, or the lesser of a choice of evils. Conducting this politics is a very high artistic, scientific and ethical business: Aristotle says it is the principal branch of ethics. Now in this sphere of practical and noticeably effective politics, THE COMMONWEAL is by tradition non-partisan and impartial. It is not committed to any program or party of its own or of another group. THE COMMONWEAL is not "in politics."

M. Maritain specifies another kind of politics, not so closely wrapped up in national structures, in governments, or in power:

> While political justice—which is destroyed both by the perversion, that is, by Machiavellianism, and by the distraction of Ethics, that is, by Hypermoralism—is the prime spiritual condition of lasting success and welfare for a nation as well as for a civilization, the prime material condition of this lasting success and welfare is on the one hand that heritage of accepted and unquestionable structures, fixed customs and deep-rooted common feelings which bring into social life itself something of the determined physical data of nature, and of the vital unconscious strength proper to vegetative organisms; and on the other hand that common inherited experience and that set of moral and intellectual instincts which constitute a kind of empirical practical wisdom, much deeper and denser and much nearer the hidden complex dynamism of human life than any artificial construction of reason. And both this somewhat physical heritage and this inherited practical wisdom are intrinsically and essentially bound to and dependent upon moral and religious beliefs. As regards Political Ethics and political common good, the preservation of these common structures of life and of this common moral dynamism is more fundamental than any particular action of the prince, however serious and decisive this may be in itself. . . . The Roman Empire did not succeed by virtue of the stains, injustices and cruelties, which were intermingled in its policy, but by virtue of this internal physico-moral strength.

As a review of literature, the arts and "public affairs," THE COMMONWEAL ought to try to observe and analyze dispassionately politics of the first type, linked with state power and practical social work for the common good. But it should engage more directly and actively in this second field of politics. It must try to bring to consciousness and to purify the good motives in our inheritance, try to develop loyalty to the creative energies of our tradition and history. It is a personal duty of people who are not, and have no obligation to be, "in politics."

Maritain considers politics of this second kind, although apparently not so amenable to full rational treatment and decision, nor so directly influential in determining social justice and civic power, yet "deeper" and "more basic and more important to the life of human societies than particular good or bad calculations." Furthermore,

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this "cultural life" and "common cultural heritage" has a longer "human extension":

> For there exists a genuine temporal community of mankind—a deep intersolidarity, from generation to generation, linking together the peoples of the earth—a common heritage and a common fate, which does not concern the building of a particular *civil society,* but of a *civilization,* not the prince, but the culture, not the perfect *civitas* in the aristotelian sense, but that kind of *civitas,* in the augustinian sense, which is imperfect and incomplete, made up of a fluid network of human communications, and more existential than formally organized, but all the more real and living and basically important. To ignore this non-political *civitas humani generis* is to atomize the basis of political reality, to fail in the very roots of political philosophy, as well as to disregard the progressive trend which naturally tends toward a more organic international structure of peoples. . . .

Therefore this second field of politics, or the raw materials of social life, more directly and inescapably than the first, identifies personal and private moral life with social responsibility. No matter how strongly the external forces of history may thrust aside the small efforts of private conscience, in this field at least every man, whatever his vocation and place of life, must be a politician.

Eastern New World

SHOULD Europeans withdraw from India? Should they abandon their concessions in China? What gradual changes might be made from imperialism to partnership? Who was winning in the contest to obtain the greatest subservience, the greatest loyalty, the most obvious affection from the "Natives"? These questions were asked not so long ago by peoples who had it in their power to be more cruel, to be more kind, to remain where they were in Asia or to withdraw. The decision was theirs to make—if possible, of course, on the basis of some morality as behooves moral people. They considered these matters somewhat as we consider the problem of interracial justice. As we do, they counted heavily on the beneficent and somewhat mysterious effect of time and enlightenment. Now, suddenly, time is acting—like an electric clock gone mad. Within a few months, driven from Hong Kong, driven from Singapore, imperilled in Burma and in Java, at war on all continents, on all the seas, the British and the United Nations face a colonial problem to which an immediate solution is being given by others. When Chiang Kai-shek visited Gandhi and immediately afterward suggested that Indian cooperation against Japan and Germany could most surely be obtained by granting India her own freedom to defend, there could be no doubt as to the character of England's decision. She had to yield as gracefully as possible, and make a promise the fulfillment of which can be as profoundly revolutionary as anything that has taken place in this war.

"Asia for the Assiatics" has long been a slogan for the Japanese. What they mean by this battle cry may be discovered by studying what has actually taken place in Korea, Manchuria, and the mandated islands. The native populations have felt and resented the heavy burden of Japanese domination. But they aspire to the basic idea of self determination in the Orient. To the peoples of China, India and the East Indies in whom this aspiration has been growing through long years of struggle and increasing political maturity, the war now presents this objective as an immediate political possibility. However, Westerners established in the Orient cannot solve matters by taking the first boat home. Self realization would be destroyed even more thoroughly under the new totalitarian empires. The anti-Axis Western powers and the Eastern peoples must work out as equals definite plans for political and economic independence.

The Church in Latin America

FOR anyone who looks for it—and more people in the US than ever before are looking for it—there is rich news every week now about Latin America and Pan Americanism. It is necessary to skip many important items in order to come to the powerful denial of Archbishop Cicognani in regard to Vatican policy in Latin America:

> I have been directed by His Eminence, the Cardinal Secretary of State, to declare publicly that the assertions contained in the . . . press releases are purely fictitious. The Holy See, however desirous of international peace and harmony, made no pronouncements whatsoever, either through diplomatic channels, or confidentially, before, during or after the Inter-American Conference of Rio de Janeiro. . . .

For those who read the American press it was not immediately obvious what press reports were being denied in so unusual fashion. As the *Catholic News* points out, they were stories in the secular press circulated by nazi sources in South America which made the Vatican out as being opposed to the kind of inter-American cooperation for which this country and nearly all the others of the hemisphere are now working. The reports were the same as those broadcast by the Berlin and Tokyo radio. In this country, the political "line" has been projected by the *New Republic,* in an article by Max Gissen, called "Clerical Fascism in Latin America"—a stupid article, on the face of it old-fashioned anti-Catholic, but containing within it the same picture which the Axis wants to popularize: of the Catholic Church linked with the totalitarian powers through the Americas of the South, and her enemies still prone at the bottom of the cold dish of stale, adolescent leftism.

The "Left" and "Right" of the past century have for a long time failed to align rationally those who favor the Church and those who oppose her. The past week's news from Mexico shows that in Latin America, and in that particular

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country which has been most of all torn by religious struggles, the old classifications injure truth and trouble society. The Governor of Jalisco, that state of bad memory, claims the Catholic clergy in his territory conduct pro-Axis propaganda. Foreign Secretary Padilla of the Republic counters by saying this is not so. The Church is accused of being linked with the Right, with the Axis, with the Sinarchist movement. The Archbishop claims the Church is not in politics; prominent Catholics speak out against the Axis and in favor of Pan Americanism. Many whom the Left would claim in some of their politics are Catholics or true friends of the Church. The edges are all blurred. They should be erased. The means a person settles upon for obtaining social justice are not decided in the detail of practical politics by the religious *credo* one subscribes to. Within the bounds of true social purpose, a political and economic *credo* does not determine the attitude men take toward the Church. Catholics can find plenty to oppose among Left and Right and they must gather from both sides truths and goods which seem to exist, most unhappily, almost incidentally within the dissolving and impure secular mixtures of both of them.

The "Schrecklichkeit" Items

THE MOST distasteful duty of the normal historian of the war is the recording of those horror stories which seem to be authentic. Yet it is a duty; when they are proved to be facts, they are relevant facts. We have never shared the belief, widely expressed a very few years ago, and always latent in a certain school of pacifism, that men can be scared out of fighting by looking at photographs of dead soldiers rotting where they fell. Similarly, we do not think that the horror story is the best primer for educating the peoples to peace: immediately, that is. In the short run, horror is, indeed, a most grimly two-edged example: it may inspire to remorse for and repudiation of the common cruelty of mankind—or it may inspire to retaliation and yet more beastly cruelty. It is simply that any datum of experience has its place in the recording of that experience. In the long run, these particular items must have some real effect in cleansing the will of mankind and inclining it to peaceful settlements. But, however that may be, they are part of the picture of war and must enter into the judgment of it, if that judgment is to have integrity. There is unhappily no lack of such items in the present war, and whether or not the Germans were wronged a quarter-century ago by the imputation of a deliberate policy of *Schrecklichkeit,* such imputation plainly does not wrong them today. Reports from Poland prove this. More recent reports from Russia are to the same effect, though many readers may feel that these latter are not so well authenticated objectively. However, while it is of course valid to ask that such a frightful story, for instance, as that of the torture and execution of the seventeen-year-old Soviet schoolgirl be attested by impersonal and disinterested witnesses, it is not valid to dismiss such a story, once proved, merely because Soviet Russia has herself a long history of cruelty to answer for. By contrast, the available news from Japan is more wholesome. Canada's salty talker-out-of-turn Hepburn claims that "the proud US marines are being forced to pull rickshas in Hongkong," and this if true aligns itself with the other types of humiliation that Japan has seemed constrained to inflict on foes—for instance, the slapping of faces. But it is not the worst that can befall; and there must be relief and gratitude in all who read the current Red Cross report that captives in Japan are being treated decently and humanely.

America's Food Weapon

HUGH GIBSON, former American ambassador to Belgium and Brazil and leading member of important international disarmament and relief commissions, has joined the slender ranks of those who publicly call for a drastic change in the Anglo-American policy of keeping food from the conquered countries. The article of this leading diplomat in the February 21 *Saturday Evening Post* develops a line of argument familiar to readers of THE COMMONWEAL. He tells of food proposals still under consideration—discussions have continued for a year while Belgian, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Serbian and other children were starving. These plans carry a minimum of risk of helping Germany. He takes the Hoover food kitchen plan as a very mild example and declares that "if the Germans seized the lot they would not get enough food to feed Germany for three hours." But "even if there were a certain element of risk involved . . . it would not absolve us and other civilized nations from our moral obligation to those peoples who have stood up to nazi aggression and gone down fighting the things we are fighting now."

In his plea for these victims of seizure and blockade Mr. Gibson asks whether it is wisdom to make exceptions and let food through to such neutrals as Sweden and Switzerland and to trust the Germans with food that always gets through to their British prisoners and then permit starvation among our allies. And all the while Germany, the intended object of the food blockade, has enough to eat. This policy plays directly into the hands of the skillful anti-American and anti-British propaganda of the German occupying authorities. After the war "what we shall need as never before is to have the greatest possible group of nations who look instinctively and with confidence to the Western democracies for guid-

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ance and leadership." Yet in view of all this we continue to "harm our friends and allies" in the vain hope of starving our enemies. "There is something wrong with this picture!"

Mr. Gibson stresses the moral effect of trying to get food to the needy, even if it were to prove unsuccessful. He suggests that the exiled governments in London be consulted by Americans and British on this subject. It is no longer a matter primarily of British policy but of allied concern. It is a vital and legitimate concern of the United States. We must get food through to our imprisoned friends.

Nation's Capital

ROUTE US 1, between Baltimore and Washington, has always been a minor national disgrace. It symbolizes, fully and aptly, the social results of *laissez-faire*. Along its fatal pavement spawn the fond imaginings of a thousand entrepreneurs, bent only on one end—so to attract the eye of the passing driver as to squeeze from him some portion of his cash. Every conceivable variation on the idea of food and lodging and drink pullulates along this main approach to our nation's political center. We are offered rodeo cabins, each presumably decorated with a lariat and a ten gallon hat as well as heated by steam. The manufacturer of a flea powder has covered his property with effigies of scratching dogs and advertises all sorts of tools for rent. Continuously, every rod or two, are blazoned forth the merits of some hotel a given number of miles ahead of you. Forty miles of commercial heaven, with silent barkers making all the visual noise their creators have known how to devise. No city in the world has such an avenue of entrance, and no city in the world is like Washington.

The war has only intensified the horrors of US 1. Where there was one hot dog and barbecut, there are now two or three; where there was an occasional hot spot bar and grill, there are now as many as the law will allow, and in Maryland that is a sufficient plenty. The number of overnight cabins (with the color-line clearly delineated, in capital letters) is past computation. For on this highway you would never know we have a tire shortage. Probably every man jack who uses his rubber for a trip to Washington is certain he is going to get a job which will eventually rate his being able to buy tires. Trust Uncle Sam.

* * *

The city itself used to be a very quiet place, something like what New Yorkers have always believed Brooklyn to be, or like what Philadelphia actually is on a Sunday. Government clerks went to work on time and quit strictly on time. They knew they were safe, with fairly soft jobs for a good spate of years and then pensions to follow until they were past worrying about such things. There was an atmosphere of lethargy in the air, inspired as much by the physical as by the spiritual climate. A good place for older people to live in and live long, for in such a place nature impels them to favor their old organs, to commit no follies.

The papers have been telling us Washington is a madhouse, an ant-hill filled with too many ants, a bee-hive so overcrowded there is no place left for honey. This is true enough, in a sense, but a war does not change the climate. There are still plenty of old stand-bys standing by, plenty of old residents ending their days as peacefully as they may. Washington is not a city of hysterics, but rather a placid, semi-Southern, provincial, sprawly, slow-moving city, with its traditionally contiguous slums and palaces and middle class dwellings and then more slums; and on this perennial bread is spread a thick layer of hysteria jam.

* * *

A lot of new people. Maybe a quarter of a million of them. Maybe more. Some of the old-time bureaus, little connected with the war effort, have been and are still moving out. The effect is not visible. There are still many more new ones coming in than old ones going out. Where to sleep them? These days, next to everybody (who can) takes boarders, and there are signs and portents that tomorrow every family possessed of spare space will be required to harbor the harborless. One young woman fresh from Minnesota is looking for a room. There is a government agency to help her find one. If she comes from that far North, reasons the agency, *maybe* she'd take that nice room, so near the place she works, that has been so long vacant. . . . She takes a look. It *is* a nice room, and the landlady is as nice a person as you could meet. But the neighbors on both sides are Negroes. . . . . Minnesota may be North, but the room is still vacant.

It sounds like a gold mine for property owners, but it's really only a silver mine. An efficient machinery has been set up for controlling rents; it works on the assumption that the rates paid about a year ago are the top limit for today, and that no raising of rents is permissible except in special cases. But Washington rents a year ago were already disproportionately high, and Washington real estate taxes are disproportionately low, as is the sale value of most Washington land. It *is* a silver mine.

This is the approximate scale of prices for sleeping tickets: a room in someone else's home, clean, comfortable enough, no roommates, little privacy, costs about $35 monthly (New York equivalent about $22.50). A one room furnished apartment with bath and serving kitchenette, $80 (NY equivalent, $50). Six to eight room house, usually furnished, $150. Four to six room modern apartment, as high as $225.

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Washington's Birthday week-end was cold and clear and beautifully sparkling—atypical of the District. Driving through the streets late Friday night something seemed different from before Pearl Harbor, different from other cities now. The use of the streets as a great, continuous public garage seemed still to be normal practice, although the occasional vacant spots along the curb were a novelty. But essentially *here* was no difference. Where did it lie? Suddenly one relaized how dark the houses, hotels, apartments were. And friends explained that at least a partial blackout was the constant rule. The Mayflower has black oilcloth, with small square openings at visual center, glued to the plate glass of all its revolving doors. And every night there is a pattern of brightly lit, unshaded windows in the building housing OCD.

I decided to call up X, in the Department of A. His usually robust voice was dull, his usual sense of fun grown unreliable. He was sorry he could not see me (we are life-long friends). He had to go back to the office Sunday afternoon, and did not expect to be home again before Monday evening. Twenty-six hours steady at his job, all of them over a holiday. How long had that sort of business been going on? So long he couldn't remember anything else. . . .

Then I saw Y at lunch. His job certainly is such as should include a lot of moving about and seeing people. He looked pasty and harassed, and said he had time to see practically no one.

Then Z of the B Committee, who has been at his job for nearly eighteen months, spared me a few minutes time. He had years ago gone through the mill of being a clerk and finally junior partner in a large and famous New York law firm; in those days he had often looked tired, but nothing to what he is in Washington. He has not had a day off—including Sundays and holidays—since his job began. His associates looked a bit like rinsed-out dishrags, too.

I began thinking. Do Germans in Berlin government bureaus look like class A flu hazards, with a hint of nervous exhaustion in the corners of their eyes? What a happy hunting ground for a good virulent virus. And what a fine harvest is promised in the dog days—doggier in Washington than almost anywhere on earth.

* * *

The jam is so thick you are scarcely aware of the bread; its humble, slow-going whiteness shows through only in such sheltered nooks as the Smithsonian Institution or in forgotten corners of the Department of Agriculture or—most hopeful of all—in the calm restraint of the President's Washington's Birthday speech. He, at least, seems not yet to have become infected with *morbus bellicus*.

The strangest effect of this disease is that even those who suffer from it admit that it is a foolish disease. Wryly they exchange their passwood: "Inter-office Communication!" And they know its true causes (alleged cause: "we must *work* to win"). The true causes: bad organization arising from overlapping functions, lack of any established hierarchy of authority, uncertainty of tenure. Half your time you spend proving that you should be allowed to go on doing what you are supposed to be doing.

* * *

The mania for planning plays its part—that mania against which Hermann Rauschning so movingly warned us, that mania which succeeds only is obfuscating rather than preparing action, which springs from the absence of delegated authority.

Said Dr. Q: "Washington is the most thoroughly academic city in the world. Everybody is either writing a term report, a thesis, a syllabus, or else reading one . . ."

Things are being done, many of them very well done, but the jam element should be allowed to follow the example long since set by the fair sex, should be allowed to abandon the ridiculous and hated bustle. There are many things to be said both for tortoises and snails, at the expense of hares and bumble bees. . . .

One good thing has happened, too. There has been a surprising and gratifying increase in the number of Washington's good restaurants.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

Picasso and the *Normandie*

By M. A. COUTURIER

THESE are only impressions and perhaps they are worth no more than impressions are worth. They are light leaves only, in the wind.

On that afternoon when the light was so pure, and, overhead, over New York, heavy dun-colored smoke from the burning *Normandie* drove across the sky, it seemed, suddenly, that an atmosphere of misfortune wrapped the city and that all the memories and dreams flaming in disaster were also portents of even graver catastrophe. Frenchmen watched the stricken burning vessel with heavy heart, seeing in it their country submitted once more to an ultimate trial, and many Americans, in their emotion at this new blow falling on defeated France, seemed shamed that this time the blow fell through their fault.

The following day, Tuesday, lugubrious photographs in the newspapers, accounts recalling the triumphant ceremonial surrounding the vessel's maiden voyage, a slightly forced tone of condolence—and then, toward noon, the news that

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the great ship, finally, had capsized—all this served to strengthen an impression of final mourning for the things of France of which the vessel had been a symbol. Meanwhile, on that same Tuesday, while smoke still rose from the foundered ship, and not far from where she lay, Paul Rosenberg was busy at work in his new art gallery, peacefully and carefully arranging on his walls eleven admirable canvases by Picasso. Dare I say that the one thing compensates for the other? I not only dare say it but I even believe that it is highly proper for me to say it.

I am no judge as to whether the *Normandie* with all her luxury and comfort, and her nonfunctional prow, fully deserved to be the "pride of the French merchant marine," as so often she was called. I am told that in certain realms of mechanical technique she had this primacy. And I am happy to believe it so.

But what I wish to say is: whatever achievement she represented, it calls for perhaps not quite the extremity of grief which today surrounds her loss. The real glory of France, her real grandeur and her patrimony stem from realities which are both poorer, materially, and purer—so immaterial and so pure that with tranquil ease they evade certain disasters just as they are free from a certain bondage. In this sense all that is manifest, inevitably and naturally so, in the grouping together—so simply and as if spontaneously—of a dozen cubist paintings by Picasso in a New York art gallery . . . is infinitely more precious than the speed and luxury of your kings and queens of the sea.

* * *

From the street, then, one had seen in the gallery window a gray Corot of the painter's last years. One had gone into the gallery. One had been greeted by two sculptures: the first, calm and wise, by Maillol, the second, mad and magnificent, by Rodin; then came drawings by Degas, by Sisley, by Manet. Finally the large and splendid Picassos. Lipchitz was there, talking with the master of the house; André Breton had just left. In the gallery next door were paintings by Dufy and Vlaminck; at Bignou's there were more Dufys and some by Lurçat: at Pierre Matisse, paintings by his father, by Rouault, by Derain.

Here are the master works, here is the symbol of the most certain and highest glories of a civilized people. Here is France's title—despite her failings—to the respect and the gratitude of the world, title which is not lost in the drifting smoke, which does not sink into the frozen waters of the Hudson, is not invalidated by the contempt and calumny of men who, after all, have not proved themselves capable of doing much better than France did, or indeed of learning anything from the example of her misfortune.

It has become needful to say these things, because we see, now, what it cost Paris to have constituted, for a hundred years, the highest focal center in western civilization. I leave aside the work of her scholars and philosophers; I say only that the art of our times, all modern art, was born in Paris and lived in Paris. Those great and perilous adventures which saved and renewed western art, it is in Paris only that they could be attempted and carried to their fulfillment. Elsewhere nothing of such sort appeared possible or even conceivable: in Paris it seemed quite simple and natural that every twenty years a new generation of men of genius should arise, to question all they saw, to renew all they looked upon.

France fell. Picasso has remained in Paris: certainly in danger, this Spaniard and this "red" thus has given proof and lesson of exemplary faithfulness in the face of the common enemy. But I must say that it is justice that he should have done so. If the Germans are in Paris, it is perhaps because Paris for a century was truly the only city in the world where the atmosphere was pure enough for a Matisse and a Bonnard, a Braque and a Picasso, to breathe and live. Great artists are always like wild plants which grow and flower only in certain soils, at certain seasons. The flowering of their gifts, their slow and uncertain growth require that they have about them the freedom and the transparence of a spiritual climate in which all may be understood, accepted, but also judged. A climate in which discernment, and consequently severity, stands measured to the scale of freedom, and in which the clearness is so great that anything mediocre dissolves of itself. The perfection of such a spiritual climate France alone in the last hundred years gave to the world. But this perfection drained her of strength.

The living forces in a people are not unlimited: all that a nation has to pledge of intellectual audacity and moral firmness, of risks accepted and of all manner of sacrifices in certain adventure of the spirit, in this world of plunder and prey, must some day be paid for. We have had more than a sufficiency of academicians and journalists who have blamed our defeat on our cubist painters and our surrealist poets. The accusation is not entirely false. But the very thing which indeed may accidentally have furthered our ill fortune, first of all, gave us grandeur and fame. Let us not complain. No shipwreck can ever deprive us of that kind of grandeur. A few paintings hung on four walls will always be enough to maintain in some realm of the spirit the proof and the benefit of the liberties we have won. The calm and gentle light of the Ile de France still lives in this dark world, here or there it breaks through the clouds.

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The Coming Battle for India

To whom would this rich prey fall, if it falls?

By **Albert A. Brandt**

IT IS for India that the last and decisive battle of the Old World will be fought. That German-Japanese collaboration in this fantastic scheme was formulated, and prepared in detail, a long time ago is certain and can even now be documented, at least in part. As early as 1935, the Italian magazine *Gerarchia,* founded by Benito Mussolini, under the title "L'alleanza nippo-germanica per il predominio sul mundo," actually published what amounts to a blueprint of this collaboration; and in 1937, Admiral Gadow, a close friend of Grand Admiral Erich von Raeder, in the official *Deutsche Militaerische Rundschau* said this:

> As soon as the opportunity arises, Japan will have to attack Hongkong and destroy the British navy in Chinese waters. She will have to attack and blockade Singapore. She will have to send her U-boats to Aden, will have to help close the Suez Canal and foster rebellion in India and Egypt. She will have to take over Thailand and destroy the ports of Darwin and Derby in northern Australia. She must take Borneo and destroy the British fortifications at Colombo.

The western arm of the Hitler-manipulated super-pincer, at this writing, seems to have stopped moving; in fact, it has been shoved back somewhat by the valiant counter thrusts of the Russians. But it is the considered judgment of some of the best authorities that the apparent Russian successes are due largely to withdrawals of German forces from the eastern front in preparation for the nazi spring campaign. It must also and particularly be noted that the Germans have held on, and are still holding on like grim death to their south-easternmost conquests; that they still hold most of the Crimean peninsula; and that they have been pushed back only a little way from Rostov. For it is more than likely that there the *Fuehrer* will launch his next offensive.

Rumors and reports during the last few months have so systematically pointed away from this battlefront that the suspicion is growing that they have been circulated with a purpose. It would not be the first time that master propagandist and "minister of public enlightenment" Herr Goebbels has successfully befuddled the world.

Certainly, Turkey may be attacked, and Cyrenaica appears to be even now in the process of being wrested once again from the hands of the British by Field Marshal Rommel, whom Churchill only recently paid the gallant tribute of calling "a great general." But it is quite as possible that Turkey may evade an attack by coming to terms with Hitler, particularly if a thrust by land toward the Caspian Sea and by water to Transcaucasia is successful.

The western gate

The distance from the easternmost points reached by the German armies in the vicinity of Rostov-on-Don and Kerch on the Sea of Azov to the northwestern boundary of India is still several hundred miles, and almost insurmountable barriers lie astride the routes leading to the Khyber Pass, the Indus River and the fertile plains of Great Britain's most precious possession.

Yet the claim that India is the next prime objective on Hitler's program is made in all seriousness, based upon the diabolically shrewd though daring plans of the nazi geo-political and military staffs; upon the intimate knowledge of their visionary temerity; their gift, nothing short of genius, for detailed preparation and their utter ruthlessness in the execution of daring schemes.

Why should the nazis want India? Is the conquest of India, possible? How can it be achieved? And what is England, what is the United States going to do about it?

The answers to these questions will be written in the blood of millions of human beings about to be sacrificed by one whose dreams make those of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, of Attila and Suleiman, aye, and of Napoleon and Rhodes pale into insignificance.

Why does Germany want India?

Here is what Count Ernst zu Reventlow, one of the fore-runners of Hitler's contemporary geo-politicians, had to say in his book, "India, its Importance for Great Britain, Germany and the Future of the World":

> India is the center of gravity of the British Empire. Her liberation would remove all that tremendous pressure England exerts upon the Middle East, Arabia and North Africa, *id est,* upon the Orient as well as the Mediterranean. And thus the entire system held together solely by a balance of tension would burst asunder when deprived of its gravitational focus.
>
> If British sea power can be destroyed, the problem of India is automatically solved; failing that, a solution must be sought by land in order to remove the heart of the

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Empire. Whoever liberates—or conquers—India, re-establishes the geographical-political equilibrium of the world.

When Hitler's master planners in 1939 realized that the conquest of the British Isles and the destruction of British sea power could not be achieved as easily as might have been hoped—if, indeed, at all—Reventlow's alternative plan for the destruction of the Empire's center of gravity was immediately and ruthlessly put into execution. In this titanic plan the conquest of southeastern Europe and the destruction of Russia actually were to be mere way stations.

"The Heart of the Empire"

It must not be overlooked that in carving out the "heart of Great Britain," the nazis would simultaneously acquire the "wealth of the Indies," a wealth so tremendous that, *ipso facto,* its possessor would become almost the master of the world.

India's resources of high-grade iron ore are the biggest on earth—a fact known to geologists but not to the world at large. Together with Burma, India has an excellent supply of oil and gasoline, and is the second largest producer of oil seeds. Her yield of cotton is second only to that of the United States. Her tobacco crop is larger than the USA's. She has an international monopoly on jute. She ranks third in the output of manganese, and produces three-quarters of the world's supply of mica. One third of all the cattle on earth, together with over 25,000,000 goats, 22,000,000 sheep and 14,000,000 horses are in India. Her wheat and rice crops are enormous, her output of sugar greater than that of any other country. Her manufactures, including heavy industry, have been advancing enormously.

A rich prize, indeed, which would gladden the hearts of Hitler's economists—if and when!

Nazi ideologists have never been at a loss to create a historical background and at least the appearance of justification for all of their conquests. In the case of India it is Professor Ernst Horwitz, a world famed ethnologist, who has established that "there is a close connection between the re-birth of the Aryan-German faith and that of India, both stemming from the same Indo-Germanic root." In devious but learned phraseology he has "proved" that the interests of the masses in Germany and India are identical, and point in one direction, and one direction only; to the ultimate crushing of Great Britain.

India can be invaded

Considering the feasibility of an overland invasion of India, it is a fact that it actually has been accomplished no less than seven times.

Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, was the first foreign conqueror to reach and cross the Indus in 327 B. C. Mahmud of Ghazni repeated the performance in 1020 A. D.; Mohammad of Ghor, an Afghan, around 1200. Genghis Khan accomplished the feat in 1222; Timur Beg, a Turk, broke through from Samarkand in 1403; Babur Pasha penetrated India twice, in 1519 and in 1529, and Nadir Shah was also successful in 1738. Every serious attempt at invasion succeeded until the English appeared on the scene.

As far as the Germans are concerned, they have dreamed of a conquest of the Middle East and beyond that of Iran and India for a long, long time. The phrase *Drangnach Osten* has been part of their geo-political vocabulary for decades; a Berlin to Baghdad railroad was one of the pet schemes of Emperor Wilhelm II, a rail line which, actually, was not to end at Baghdad at all, but was to be extended to Basra, Karachi and Calcutta. "Basra at the Gulf of Persia," Count zu Reventlow wrote, "will obviously not be the last stop. . . . The liberation of India is naturally the ultimate goal of German power politics."

In June, 1918, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, Freiherr von Arz, informed Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Burian that Germany's designs in Europe and Asia had been outlined to him by General Alfred Krauss, Commander of the Austrian Army of the East.

"The Germans," he stated, "have a definite economic and political aim in the Ukraine (which they then held). They wish to retain possession for all time of the most direct route to Mesopotamia and Arabia, to Baku and Persia. As long as England shuts off Germany from the West, her chief interest lies in the road through the Ukraine and the Crimea to India."

Major General Professor Dr. Karl Haushofer of *Lebensraum* fame, head of the Munich Geo-Political Institute, has been working for years on detailed plans for Germany's eastern expansion. The path Soviet Russia was to take in the early stages of this gigantic enterprise was carefully mapped out, and the Hitler-Stalin pact was definitely based upon Haushofer's visions. However, the Herr Doktor's program also provided for the present phase of World War II, the attack on Russia, its elimination as a military factor and the conquest of the Ukraine as the jumping-off place for further thrusts to the East. Thus it links up both historically and geographically with Germany's strategy under Wilhelm II, and once again the road to India has been opened.

Russia's early part in Germany's long-term Indian schemes was to be an actual attack by Russia on Iran and India, or at least the threat of an attack on the territory she had long coveted, and beyond that, a "peaceful penetration" by secret agents to help the Germans undermine the morale of the populace.

Soviet braintrusters fell in readily with Ger-

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many's designs because their own course of action, formulated almost immediately after the establishment of the USSR, tended in the same direction. After the conclusion of the Berlin-Moscow pact, hardly a day passed without the nazi press in some way or other egging on the Soviets toward the ultimate conquest of Iran and India. Thousands of so-called *Apparatchiki*—secret agents—were dispatched to foment national and religious revolts against British rule, "Workers of the Moslem faith," the slogans read, "Persians, Turks and Indians, rise against your English overlords and throw them out!"

In India communists operated under the guise of the Indian nationalist movement, and while membership in the Indian Communist Party itself was rather small, it exerted an influence entirely out of proportion with its numerical strength through the well known "transmission belt" organizations, fellow travelers, etc. M. N. Roy and Subhas Chandra Bose both have for years taken their cues from Moscow, and the effect their work has had upon the populace should by no means be underestimated. A recent report from Calcutta says that Subhas Bose has gone over to the nazis, is now in Berlin and has offered to "deliver" India to the swastika.

The joint occupation of ancient Persia by British and Soviet troops has placed an added obstacle across the nazi route to India. But Berlin is inclined to minimize its importance because Hitler's experts are convinced that (1) the activities of their agents have been effective enough to turn Iranian tribesmen into allies as soon as the time is ripe: (2) the numerical strength of the occupying forces is insufficient to stem the advance of a powerful and well equipped German army; and (3) the German-built trans-Iranian railroad can easily be wrested from the hands of the British once Tabriz, Bandar Shah and Teheran are reached.

The situation in Afghanistan is by no means encouraging for the British. Under the Kabul treaty signed by Germany and Afghanistan in August, 1939, numerous German firms opened branch offices in the Afghan capital, staffed with picked nazi agents. And the nazi inspired and financed "Young Afghans" in due course became an influential and well organized group resolved to play an important part in the coming onslaught in British India.

The mountains along the northern and northwestern frontier of India are inhabited by tribesmen such as Mohmands, Swatis, Banjaris, Afridis, Orakzais, Mahsuds and the Waziris who have been thorns in the flesh of the English ever since the Union Jack was hoisted over Indian territory. These tribes have never acknowledged British rule and look upon frontier fighting as their normal way of life. They have little if any sympathy for India and her rulers, and consider the Emir of Afghanistan their religious and political adviser. In other words, all of them are sworn enemies of the British and therefore potential allies of Germany and Japan.

And to the east, beyond Tibet, where Nepal, Burma and Thailand border on India, Japan is even now at the gates.

The Road to Mandalay

With almost the entire Ukraine as the jumping off place in German possession, the direction and course of future nazi advances are clearly delineated.

The first and most important objective of the German armies is to cut across the thinly populated steppe between the Don and the Caspian Sea. By this thrust the Germans would cut off a considerable part of the southern Soviet armies and, more important, cut off all of northern Russia from its vital oil supplies. The Gates of Derbent between the eastern slopes of the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea since time immemorial have been the great passageway for migration and conquest.

Thus Germany's next step will obviously be the advance through the Gates of Derbent, with secondary thrusts across the so-called Georgian military road over the Darial Pass, over the Krestovaya Gora and the Salavat Pass, only one of which, the Georgian road, is equipped to handle heavy mechanized traffic.

Once in Iran, two roads are open to the nazis: one along the German-built trans-Iranian railroad running from Bandar Shah on the Caspian Sea by way of Teheran to Bandar Shahpur on the Persian Gulf; the other southeastward toward Afghanistan and thence to India.

What turn the battle would take once the Nazi legions were within striking distance, if and where the German and Japanese armies would meet is another question. But if they should meet in India there must by necessity be a clash between the partners. Both Japan—since Hideyoshi in the 16th century—and Germany have included this rich country in their dreams of empire. Could Germany ever be expected to yield India to Japan?

In Quest to Have Not

Always when I see Italian marble
and great burnished mahogany sitting quiet
and ruthless as the indulgence of five centuries,
always I ask whose is the skull
set in jewels grinning there in shadow,
who thrust all this from him feverishly
as the white dove flew nimbly from the mouth
and the feathers made great onslaughts
against the mind, loosening, flattening himself,
to dive into the eye of the needle.

EDWIN HONIG.

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The Admiral and the Woodpecker

By VINCENT ENGELS

UNTIL he moved away from us recently, the grand old man of our neighborhood in the city of Washington was undoubtedly Admiral Fuller, retired. Despite the tedium of retirement following a career which had taken him into all the better harbors of the world, despite also the anxiety imposed on him by the illness of his wife, the Admiral was thought by all of us who knew him to be a contented, even a happy man, at peace with the world and with himself.

Then he fell out with a woodpecker which for some time had been active about his premises.

The Admiral's house stood in a grove of old locust trees infested with a grub of which the woodpecker was inordinately fond, and every day its hammering resounded through the yard. Occasionally it attacked the telephone pole which stood at the back of the Admiral's lot, and this, being of seasoned white pine, gave forth a sharper sound than the locust trees. At other times, especially about five in the morning when it was full of the joy of dawn, being unable otherwise to join in the happy chorus of bird song all around, it drummed steadily on the metal gutters of the Admiral's house, which of course resulted in the sharpest and most reverberating sound of all.

This continued hammering on locust, white pine and zinc came to irritate the Admiral's wife almost more than she could bear, and so the Admiral tried in various ways to get rid of the woodpecker; at first to humor his wife, for he was very fond of her, but eventually on his own behalf, out of pure exasperation.

Perhaps if he had still been in active service, this would not have happened, but when a man has little else to do with himself, a problem which cannot be solved, however small, may be enough to break his heart.

The first thing the Admiral did was to throw stones at the woodpecker. It flew away, of course, but presently flew back. He was expecting this, and was prepared to keep up a barrage of stones, all day if necessary, until the woodpecker got the idea. This it refused to do. At nightfall, it was hammering on the metal gutter, and the Admiral had a lame arm.

Next day he wrote to the Department of Agriculture. On its advice, he tied long streamers of rags and paper to the trees, and hung bells from the gutter which he could ring, by means of a rope leading through one of the windows, whenever the woodpecker came too near. This had no effect. Then he wrote to the nature editors of the newspapers. He was told that if the locust trees were cleared of grubs and other vermin, the woodpecker in all likelihood would transfer its activities elsewhere. A tree surgeon was consulted, and an arrangement made whereby the locust trees were to be scraped, trimmed, inoculated, dusted and sprayed at regular intervals and at no little expense. This had no more effect than the bells, the rags and the stones. Incidentally, the stone barrage had been continued, whenever the Admiral's arm would permit. He also tried an air rifle, but this instrument had too pronounced a trajectory, and he discarded it. Then he acquired a .22, and a supply of cartridges loaded with bird shot, and he used this whenever he could be sure that the police were out of hearing, and his neighbors looking the other way.

By this time his wife was more concerned over her husband than over the woodpecker, what with stones crashing through her neighbors' windows, rags fluttering all over the yard, the smell of lime sulphur, nicotine and fish soap constantly in the air, the report of the .22 and the increasing use of profanity in the Admiral's conversation, of such a lurid nature that she was now beginning to understand why he had been known throughout the fleet as "Brimstone" Fuller.

On every occasion therefore, she implored him to desist, not to excite himself, and to remember that woodpeckers are God's creatures, but it is not reported that the Admiral ever heard her.

Good shooting

The time came when a well aimed shot brought the woodpecker fluttering to the ground, and there it lay, in the middle of the lawn, with its feet and beak turned to the sky.

The Admiral was horrified. His first instinct, which remains unexplained, was to hide the gun. Next he bent over the bird, from a distance of six feet. He could see no sign of a wound; however there appeared to be a feather or two missing beneath the bill. On the possibility that the bird was not mortally injured, he decided to attempt to revive it, and called for a pitcher of ice water, which he poured carefully on its head. The woodpecker blinked its eyes, got to its feet and spread its wings, but then fell to one side. The Admiral doused it again; once more the bird got up, and after a hop or two, collapsed. The Admiral followed it around the yard, administering ice water, and observing that the bird was intact, but that it had apparently suffered some sort of a shock which had weakened its sense of balance and direction.

By this time the Admiral's wife was sending frantic messages to learn what was going on. Unable to concentrate under these conditions, the Admiral wrapped the bird in his pocket handkerchief, and took it up the street to an empty field,

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where he released it, and posted himself as a guard of one to await its recovery. A crowd of small and bigger boys, and a number of grown ups soon gathered about him, which of course did nothing to improve his state of mind.

Some dogs, a spaniel, a dachshund and a nondescript sort of setter arrived with the boys and soon became excited, circling madly about, their long ears flapping, and barking furiously whenever the woodpecker got off on a feeble, tumbling flight, while the Admiral stood near, trying to frighten them away, and ready to rescue the bird if it should fall again, which it invariably did. Then a couple of large cats appeared at the other side of the field, the kind of cats that show up whenever dogs begin to bark; there they sat, lashing their tails, and every time the Admiral looked in that direction, they seemed to be getting a little nearer.

Strategic retreat

Unwilling to leave the woodpecker to be torn to pieces in this place, the Admiral wrapped it up again, and took it home, and locked it in the bathroom while he tried to phone the National Geographic Society, where as he knew from experience there are people who can advise on problems of every description. The Geographic, however, had closed shop for the day. Meanwhile the woodpecker perked up a bit and began drilling the bathroom door. The Admiral's wife, having been perturbed and agitated all the afternoon, now became a little hysterical; her nurse found it necessary to summon the physician. When that gentleman arrived, he found his patient with a blood pressure of 230, and the Admiral on the telephone again. Exploring all possibilities, he had at last gotten in touch with the Zoo. The authorities there refused to take the woodpecker into the Bird House, but did suggest that it be released somewhere inside the Zoo fence, and there at any rate it would be safe from dogs and cats.

The Admiral set off immediately with his woodpecker, and soon returned, mopping his brow, ready for a drink, and anxious now about his wife. The doctor was firm and explicit. Freedom from worry and anxiety must absolutely be provided for; strain, stress and sudden excitements of all kinds must be avoided, and he recommended that the lady be taken someplace where the woodpecker incidence is relatively low.

A cruise around South America, touching at as few ports as possible, was decided upon.

Before they left, the Admiral was asked why he had not killed the woodpecker when he had it in his power.

He thought this over very carefully before replying, "To tell the truth, I have never believed in carrying things too far."

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

WRITING on the day which is certain to be included among the most important dates of the war because of President Roosevelt's radio talk tonight, I find that no matter which subject among the many themes this commentator might choose for his weekly discussion he does in fact select, it is bound to be connected with, overshadowed by, his preoccupation with the President's speech. In this respect, probably, I share the general mood of the American public. For it would seem that only the most invincibly optimistic Americans—or the most obstinately frivolous ones—can fail to realize what has been brought home so intensely to the nation as a whole by the staggering defeats and disasters that we in common with our allies and associates in the war against the axis have suffered—namely, the fact that final defeat is not a remotely theoretical possibility, but rather an actual and perhaps imminent peril.

However, I do not propose to speculate further along this line, or guess at what may or may not be attempted by the President in his effort to deal with the realities of our present situation, except in so far as the comments that follow, dealing with what might seem to be a quite minor matter, but which, I think, is truly very important, will inevitably be connected with the major theme. The matter in question is a letter written by Miss Peggy Wood, the actress, published in the New York *Herald Tribune* of January 22, in which she voices, very vigorously and, I believe, most justly, the disgusted indignation which many others feel because of the abominably trivial and demoralizing use of "musical backgrounds" and "musical interpretations" with newsreels of the war—and also, she might have added, with so many of the radio programs purporting to deal with the war and its problems.

Addressing her letter to those who prepare and present such programs, Miss Wood writes that in her opinion the effect of actual war pictures on the minds of those who have seen them has been "consistently nullified by accompanying them with musical backgrounds. The tragic import of the pictures themselves has been sugared over with the same kind of fancy trimmings which have been used to accompany motorboat races and bathing beauties. The bombing of London and the raging fires which followed have been shown to us with musical scores, as if the pictures had been something whipped up by Hollywood for our entertainment. It has been my contention that all actual war pictures shown be shown in silence except for the voice of a commentator to explain the details. But no, the American public is soothed by orchestral strains which have helped it to relax and accept its pictorial news with no more sense of reality than if the scenes had been done by montage at a studio."

The same outrageous situation extends to many of the more important radio programs. Other important programs are vulgarized and degraded by all sorts of repulsive

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"plugs"—or whatever the jargon of the market-place term such things—advertising announcements for cigars and laxatives and all manner of merchandise. And such awful "musical effects" as are produced remind one of what G. K. Chesterton had to say not long before the outbreak of the war about jazz music in restaurants; but what he said applies even more aptly to the debilitating drivel now dispensed in the manner described by Miss Wood. Here is one little slice from Chesterton's essay: "I have already remarked, with all the restraint that I could command, that of all modern phenomena, the most monstrous and ominous, the most manifestly rotting with disease, the most grimly prophetic of destruction, the most clearly and unmistakably inspired by evil spirits, the most instantly and awfully overshadowed by the wrath of heaven, the most near to madness and moral chaos, the most vivid with deviltry and despair, is the practice of having to listen to loud music while eating a meal in a restaurant."

As G. K. C. remarks in his essay "On the Prison of Jazz," the distraction of mind that is supposed to be the merit of such music is really worse than dissipation. "For, though we talk lightly of doing this or that to distract the mind, it remains really as well as verbally true that to be distracted is to be distraught. The original Latin word does not mean relaxation; it means being torn asunder as by wild horses. To think of one thing at a time is the best sort of thinking; but it is possible, in a sense, to think of two things at a time, if one of them is really subconscious and therefore really subordinate. But to deal with a second thing which by its very nature thrusts itself more and more aggressively in front of the first thing is to find the very crux of psychological crucifixion."

It is to be hoped that Miss Wood may succeed in her very sensible and very much needed effort to reform the situation she describes so correctly.

Communications

NEW EYES FOR THE NEEDY

Short Hills, N. J.

TO the Editors: May I call the attention of readers of THE COMMONWEAL to "New Eyes for the Needy?" It is the only social service activity in New York City that does not appeal for funds. It is supported entirely by the sale of old gold and other metals—chiefly from the frames of discarded eye glasses—sent in from every state in the Union.

Lenses from these spectacles are not used for the applicants, who are examined by a competent oculist who makes new lenses and fits them to suitable shell frames that have been sent in. Since 1933 over 12,000 people of every creed and color have been supplied with glasses they could not possibly have provided themselves.

This movement has had a good deal of national publicity and the plan has already spread to fifteen other cities. In 1935, as a result of a broadcast by Alexander Woolcott, over 15,000 frames reached us in Short Hills. In 1940, "Junk to You But Joy to Others," an article in the *Ladies Home Journal,* followed by a full-page advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post* brought in over 7,000 more discarded frames.

Today there is a greater need for these spectacles than ever before. There are so many older men and women who at last have a chance to get a job in defense work, but who cannot get the positions because of poor eyesight and because they cannot afford the glasses they need. There is a waiting list today of nearly 1,000. To fit them for a job we can also use any bits of broken gold, dental gold as well as hearing aids that can be adjusted. Please send all packages to me at Short Hills, New Jersey.

MRS. ARTHUR TERRY.

A WOMAN WRAPPED IN SILENCE

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In the discussion now taking place regarding "A Woman Wrapped in Silence," may I ask your readers to keep in mind three significant facts: (1) the poem is book-length; it is highly dramatic, and the value of the poetry to some extent depends upon the context, though I also believe that any extract divorced from its context would compare favorably with the best of any other Catholic poet; (2) the poem has been brought out by a first class publisher; (3) the book has completely sold out its first edition.

After reading the letters contained in the February 13 issue of THE COMMONWEAL, I had the impression of being subjected to the repeated salvos of three heavy battleships. I take pleasure in informing you that, after the smoke cleared, I found the deck steady under my feet. The air is exhilarating.

Nevertheless I wish to make one concession. I want to reword my proposition to read that "A Woman Wrapped in Silence" is the most important long Catholic poem written in English for the last *two* hundred years.

I have no quarrel with the gentlemen concerned. They were hit hard and they hit back. Time alone will prove who is right in the assessment of this work. I have the highest respect for Mr. Brunini as the editor of *Spirit;* for Dr. Connolly as a penetrating reviewer of fiction (I read his very fine "Book Tour" in the *Springfield Catholic Mirror* every month without fail); for Dr. Maynard as an authority on many subjects (but not on "A Woman Wrapped in Silence").

There are several points to which I might take exception. I did not say that it was impossible to demonstrate my points about this poem—*at all times and in all places.* It was merely impossible to do so within the confining space limits of my column. I frankly admit my mistake in attributing the column in the *Hartford Transcript* to Father Kennedy. I have subsequently learned that it was written by a faculty member of Trinity College, Washington, D. C. The *Tablet* letter writer is a trustee of the Somerville, Massachusetts, Public Library. It is to be borne in mind that if a paper has a circulation of over 100,000, it is likely to have a few intelligent readers.

I may say that I am glad and proud to have gone on record regarding this poem. It may take some time for those mentally conditioned to a specific form of poetry to recognize the larger and more leisurely beauties of such

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work. I believe that intelligent readers, not technicians, will welcome the work before our established Catholic critics. I have great faith in such a reading public: I frankly trust their judgment before that of the intellectuals in respect to the permanently human qualities of literature. Such people do not grow tired and stale in their reading.

I would like to take up Dr. Maynard's remarks in detail. "Literary Cavalcade" is willing to give space to a debate on the technical aspects of "A Woman Wrapped in Silence." Father Lynch's blank verse is not monotonously regular. In fact, a more legitimate criticism would concern its irregularity. It is a blank verse that is distinctively modern, conversationally modulated. I stated elsewhere, in quoting these lines:

> . . . And for the moment
> Was a woman. Welcomed. Only that.
> Who hugged again within her little day
> The strange, uncalculated joy of welcome,
> And its pain.

"Was a woman. Welcomed. Only that." *is not a regular* line. But it is "a line of true orchestration in which silence and caesura have the acute symbolism of music."

I cannot take up Theodore Maynard's remarks about Edwin Arlington Robinson. First of all, I don't know whether Father Lynch has even read this poet. Secondly, I don't see any relationship between his reading of such a poet and the intrinsic value of his own work.

May I add that I am not alone in my point of view? *The Christian Century* speaks of this poem as of "epic scope and dignity." The *Christian Herald* says that *"here is a poem of the generations,* perhaps the great poem of our time." *The Catholic Universe Bulletin* says that the story is told "with a delicacy and distinction in fluent blank verse of a high order."

The Kansas City *Star* says that "it is a portrait drawn with insight and understanding and with full awareness of dramatic values." The Nashville *Tennessean:* "dramatic and powerful as poetry . . . a skilled and sensitive portrait." The Boston *Herald:* "Even a rationalistic non-Catholic reader may well find in this portrait of Mary fresh insight into the mind and heart of a real woman, and new light upon some of the events in the life of Jesus imaginatively viewed with unusual intimacy." The Dallas *Morning News:* "It is an adventure in interpretation not hitherto undertaken, and it may become famous for the reason that it not only reveals her but in a new and more adequate way it presents to us the One whose full character forever baffles complete knowledge."

WILLIAM J. GRACE.

The Stage & Screen

Under This Roof

HERBERT B. EHRMANN'S study of a Massachusetts family between the years 1846 and 1873 contains the material for a moving, major drama. The Warrens, as the salty grandmother (why must all stage grandmothers be salty?) remarks, are divided into those activated by the itching of their conscience, and those activated by the itching of their palm. Young Cornelia Warren must make a choice between her cousin exiling himself to Missouri to preach Abolition, and her cousin determined to become the first man (which is to say, the richest) of the Commonwealth. She chooses the latter. But her son favors his martyred uncle, and at 17 gives his life at Wilderness. Her husband slides from milling and banking into speculation culminating in disastrous '73.

Here, as I say, is adequate material for provocative drama. But the author has failed to vitalize his material. The action is static, and the characters are bloodless symbols of the author's ideas. For example, when Cornelia learns of her husband's decision to lend his name to a crooked promotion scheme, she appeals, not as we might expect from a flesh-and-blood wife, to his personal integrity or to their private relationship or to any values of right and wrong, but as follows: the immigrants who work in the family mill have come to America for its freedom; they look up to the Warren family as a symbol of America and therefore of freedom; if you compromise the Warren name, you thereby compromise Freedom. Not only the persons involved are here devitalized, but the concept of freedom as well, which becomes a mere plutocratic liability.

It would be unfair to present the above as Mr. Ehrmann's final word on the subject of freedom. His fault is not the quality of his ideas, but his failure convincingly to dramatize them. And I think he has been a little overanxious to underline modern parallels, which lends a meretricious odor.

Russell Lewis, the director, must share the blame for the play's static, literary effect, and the strong overhead lighting unpleasantly shadowed the faces. Barbara O'Neil played Cornelia with dignity and taste, which was perhaps as much as the part suggested; Harlan Briggs had a good time with the over-written rôle of the New York promoter, and James O'Neil gave an amusing bit portrayal of a shrewd Yankee villager. *(At the Windsor.)*

Plan M

I ENJOYED "Plan M" more than the newspaper reviewers appeared to. Granted, its basic assumption takes a bit of swallowing: we are asked to accept that on the eve of the Nazi invasion of England, a German agent is substituted for the chief of the British War Office, with no one the wiser; a faked defense plan is exchanged for the real plan drafted by the High Staff; which necessitates kidnaping the entire Staff, as well as the King and his Prime Minister.

But the author—James Edward Grant—is frankly offering fantasy rather than history. Highly-regarded melodramas have in the past demanded equal or greater suspension of belief. The substitution, as performed before our eyes on the stage, is ingenious and the whole conception, I should say, rather brilliant; and I think the critics who found it in unallowably bad taste at this stage of the British war effort, are unreasonably scrupulous, considering the play's intention.

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A more valid criticism, it seems to me, might be its lack of pressing excitement. Voices bark constantly through a brace of annunciators, the teletype ticks frantically, mysterious lights flash along the coastlines of the wall map; but suspense doesn't follow in degree. Our suspense, indeed, attaches itself not to the invasion, but to the substitution: how long before the substitute gives himself away? Perhaps for the purposes of melodrama the part of the substitute General is too roundly written. The entire action covers no more than three hours, but crisis expands time: we watch the underling agent little by little expand to fill the dimensions of his new rôle. It would have been merely obvious if his vanity alone had swollen; his talents, never before challenged, keep pace—or rather, set the pace. From imitating a General, he becomes a General: becomes, indeed, a far more forceful, more resourceful General than the real one, so that not his inadequacy but his too great adequacy endangers the deception.

Len Doyle plays both Generals, the real and the bogus, with skill and relish; I especially admired the way he inflected "Yes" in his conversations with the annunciators. The only other character drawn in the round is the secretary with a hero complex, satisfactorily played by Anne Burr. Lumsden Hare portrays convincing dyspepsia, and A. P. Kaye is an amiable orderly. *(At the Belasco.)*

Pirates of Penzance and Jooss Ballet

THE Boston Comic Opera Company and the Jooss Ballet troupe have decided to part company, which leads one to wonder why they ever joined. The discrepancy between their latest joint offerings is especially disconcerting. "The Prodigal Son" is a determinedly unhumorous interpretation of the old parable with a new totalitarian twist. The mood throughout is sombre and portentous, charged with cryptic symbolism.

And then all at once we are in the artificial, fanciful, tongue-in-cheek world of Gilbert and Sullivan, where pirates scruple to prey upon ships captained by orphans, and Major Generals rally their troops in four-syllable rhymes. The juxtaposition involuntarily satirizes the ballet, as Gilbert and Sullivan did all sacrosanct and pretentious institutions.

The Boston company got more out of the second act of "The Pirates of Penzance" than its first; except for their King (Bertram Peacock) the pirates were a disappointment. But the policemen, sergeanted by Robert Pitkin, were a delight; Florenz Ames was as cute a Major General as he was a First Lord of the Admiralty in "Pinafore" and a Lord High Executioner in "The Mikado"; Morton Bowes endowed Frederic with just the right degree of tenor pomposity; and Kathleen Roche convinced us that "Poor Wandering One" is the gem among Sullivan's serenades. *(At the St. James.)* DAVID BURNHAM.

Escaping for the Nonce

ABBOTT and Costello are again romping along their merry way. And how they romp! In *"Ride 'Em Cowboy"* they are a couple of drug store cowboys who progress from selling peanuts at a Long Island rodeo show to milking cows and roping steers on a dude ranch in Arizona. Of course the ranch is very Hollywood with fancy chaps, swimming pool with girls, the Merry Macs singing all over the place to entertain guests, and Ella Fitzgerald who keeps new arrivals swaying with "A tisket, a tasket." Dick Foran is on hand too as a writer of Western novels who knows nary a thing about horses and steers except to keep off of them. He sings such ballads as "Give Me My Saddle" and "I'll Remember April" and then falls in love with Anne Gwynne, the ranch owner's daughter. But Director Arthur Lubin doesn't let his film get too involved in plot. You came to see and hear Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, and it's the comedians you get. There are plenty of chases—with Costello being chased; and there's one long dream sequence (too long, but very funny) with Costello as the dreamer and victim. Pudgy Costello is a coy, clever comedian, no matter whether he's being pursued by an Indian chief, milking a cow, winning at poker, or just tossing a sassy reply to the lifeguard who asks if he took a shower, "Why, is there one missing?"

In *"Mr. Bug Goes to Town,"* the latest full length animated cartoon film from the Fleischer Studios, one keeps recalling how well Walt Disney always handles his animals and one regrets that Dave Fleischer isn't doing as well with his bugs. Mr. Fleischer's artists tried too hard to project human characteristics into this bug world—especially the characteristics of movie people; and the trouble seems to be that the type of moving picture that they're imitating is just too B. In our cast we have pretty little Honey Bee and Mr. Bumble her father; Hoppity, a well meaning but awkward hero who is always leading his fellow bugs to a new home and finally does succeed in establishing them in a gorgeous garden beside a penthouse. There's C. Bagley Beetle, as ominous a villain as ever wanted to marry such a sugary heroine as Honey Bee. He is aided by Swat, the fly, and Smack, the mosquito, a couple of Dead End Bugs. The film's color is a bit on the gaudy side. Some of the scenes are very cute; most of them are sticky. The lively music surpasses the visualization. To be palatable these long cartoon films have to be original or cleverly imitative like the crows in "Dumbo," the milk weed ballet in "Fantasia" or Dopey in "Snow White." But if we are going to see cartoons that unimaginatively emulate movies, we'd prefer the movies, and we'll select A pictures at that.

"Wild Bill Hickok Rides" comes pretty close to being a truly escapist Western. There's handsome Bruce Cabot as the hero who's helping to establish law and order in the disorganized West in the seventies. There's Warren William to bring a gang of claim jumpers out to Montana to cheat the homesteaders out of their land. And there are miscellaneous drunks, toughs, dance hall girls, gamblers and Ward Bond as the sheriff who is the villain's stooge, and one little girl, Betty Brewer, who can hold her own and talk back to the villain as the script requires. The surprise is elegant Constance Bennett as the gal who runs the gambling joint and wears costumes that look like Hollywood's 1942 version of what women wore in 1872. Dietrich did it better in "Destry," but Bennett sings a mean song in a husky voice that sends the unshaven

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ranchers swaying. Reality becomes grim when the villain's henchmen lead the citizens of Powder River to lynch an innocent man, but Director Ray Enright manages to follow this quickly with further chases and villainy and proper restoration of the honest homesteaders; and he leaves us primed to return next week to see Wild Bill Hickok Riding Again.

"Born to Sing" is hardly a picture that we recommend you bother to see. There have been too many films in which a group of youngsters put on a show, just on the edge of Broadway, and it turns out to be big time stuff. Usually they stage their acts, which always include a couple of super production numbers, to win a bet, or to aid some favorite charity, or to prove to an unresponsive producer that they have the talent for which he has long been searching. In this case, it's to help Virginia Weidler's father (Henry O'Neill) and to prove to the world that he wrote the music he wrote. The plot is silly, the performances dull. But if "Born to Sing" happens to be the other half of your double bill, try to see at least the last fifteen minutes of it. The youngsters stage the "Ballad for Americans," and a right good job they make of the Earl Robinson-John Latouche number. Specially directed by Busby Berkeley, this Whitmanesque song has the ring and quality of the real thing and makes one very proudly American. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Pacific

Westward the Course! Paul McGuire. Morrow. $3.75

WITH the currents of world history flowing fiercely in the Eastern hemisphere and eddying around the vast Pacific basin, Mr. Paul McGuire's new book "Westward the Course!" is a timely handbook to the shattering events which have followed Pearl Harbor. Published the day the Japanese broke Johore and Singapore was doomed, it is a graphic miniature history of the Pacific, from the dim days of discovery and exploration, through the age of colonial empire, down to the inevitable struggle, which now thunders in the headlines.

Mr. McGuire visited most of the places on the eve of the war, from Hawaii to Malaya *via* Fiji, New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands East Indies. With effortless skill, he extracts and distills from standard works and personal interviews the full measure of romance and poetry, adventure and intrigue which colors past and present Pacific history. He catches in his musical, intoxicating prose the blue skies, the misty distances, the winds, rollers and tropic glories of the Pacific scene. He also supplies chapters of facts and figures, with comments delicately edged with his own superior type of wit, as of an English Catholic intellectual surveying things *sub specie aeternitatis*. For instance, "New Zealand has more variety than any other country near its size; and, until man came, was singularly free of pests."

"Westward the Course!" then, is more than potted history. It is running commentary from a mellow, widely-travelled Catholic on the ideas and values at the root of things and the outlook—not too bright—for the future. The author, who is an Australian, is one of the best Catholic Action theorists in the English-speaking world and

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in his writings he practices what he preaches, namely, *"la pénétration du milieu."* His milieu is the world of popular letters and the middle-class reading public, and he invariably brings to his work a Catholic mind and a Catholic philosophy. But it is all done in a detached, sophisticated and worldly-wise style. In this context, his writing is perhaps unique in English and his recent books are models of calculated literary apostolate. He shows how the thing can be done. Thus there are no colors missing from McGuire's canvas of the Pacific. Saint Francis Xavier, the Christian Spaniards and Portuguese, the missionaries are all there in a balanced integrated pattern, so that his book quietly answers the biased and unsatisfactory "Story of the Pacific" by Mr. Van Loon.

This is not to say that his every observation on matters historical, cultural, political and economic are *ex cathedra* Catholicism, and the author would be the last to think so. In the field of economics, for instance, his generalizations are problem-raisers rather than problem-solvers. His outlook stems from the Chester-Belloc school, the Distributist League and especially the English Catholic Land Association. An acre and a cow and subsistence peasantry may be fine ideals. But there are other economic realities in an independent industrial world. Extreme ruralism is merely running away from the problem. There is still the obligation of Catholic Action—and *la pénétration du milieu*.

But, even if Mr. McGuire's touch is perhaps surer on the poetry and romance than on the politico-economics of the Pacific, "Westward the Course!" is urgently recommended for immediate buying or borrowing and careful reading, before the Battle of the Pacific is finished and a new world has emerged. JAMES G. MURTAGH.

CRITICISM

Poetry as a Means of Grace. Charles Grosvenor Osgood. Princeton. $2.00.

DR. OSGOOD is one of the foremost American scholars and his erudition comprises both the classic and the modern literatures. He is especially notable for the humanistic attitude he has consistently adopted toward English studies and his refusal to permit formal scholarship to usurp the place properly held by appreciation and esthetic understanding of the great works of literature.

This book is a revision of lectures delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary. Dr. Osgood suggests "to all young people who desire to keep themselves articulate and to assure the perennial flow of their springs of spiritual life against the drouth of routine in business or profession" that they recognize the inspirational value of full acquaintance with a great poet. In the wisdom bred of years of experience, Dr. Osgood divides literature into three general classes: the ephemeral books, the butterflies of the moment; the books which survive as antiques, principally for their value in illustrating the flow of history; the perennial books which speak to the spirit of all men at all times. Modern man, living as he does materially and under the pressure of routine, needs to choose some one of these perennial writers, to study him profoundly and to assimilate his wisdom. Dr. Osgood is refreshingly forthright in maintaining that the practice of religion comes first, but he insists that the greatest literature is bred of

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religion and can both complement and refresh its practice.

The great writer who is to be our intellectual guide as Vergil was to Dante must possess various marks of greatness. He should hold in focus the tradition of culture which preceded him; unlike the modern specialist, he should be comprehensive in his view of life; he should be inexhaustible and rich in matter for study and speculation.

It is necessary to agree with this book as a whole and to quarrel with its parts. It would appear that Dr. Osgood, aware of the tendency of modern man to fly from a metaphysical synthesis of experience, is here offering his auditors a ready-made metaphysics in the form of the greatest works of Dante or Spenser or Milton. At the risk of appearing sectarian, it must be said that Dr. Osgood's view of specific authors treated in his book is necessarily Protestant. Hence in the crucial examples of Spenser and Milton, the Catholic will find these authors sadly lacking in some of the measures of greatness suggested by Dr. Osgood. We can appreciate these two poets as artists and as writers, but we find their synthesis of experience deficient. Not all Dr. Osgood's persuasive learning will uproot from a Catholic intelligence the conviction that both Spenser and Milton, artistry aside, were sectarian propagandists on a grand and towering scale. In an examination of nobility of soul, it would be hard to wave aside the evidence of the "View of the Present State of Ireland" and the "Eikonoklastes."

When Dr. Osgood writes of Dante and Dr. Johnson, then we are all friends again. On the physical side, press-work, layout and binding, this book and its dust-wrapper are very handsome, and no one could read it without a salutary lift of the spirit and a sharpening of the critical faculty.

J. G. E. HOPKINS.

HISTORY

The Haitian People. James G. Leyburn. Yale. $4.00.

THE REPUBLIC of Haiti presents to the student of social phenomena one of the most interesting "laboratories" in the world, for nowhere else, not even in Liberia, have the Negro's potentialities been so tested. The history of the republic, which at one time dominated the entire island of Hispaniola, has been so marked by tragic and even appalling occurrences that it has attracted a good deal of attention and has produced much literature of a somewhat sensational cast, but to the detriment of more serious study of the nation's social condition. Dr. Leyburn has supplied the need for such a study in English, and his work will be welcomed by students, though it will not feed that appetite for thrills which a book on Haiti is often expected to satiate. The historical background is given only in outline since the author is writing for persons already acquainted with that history and therefore is careful not to be drawn away from his fundamental interest, which is the social evolution and present state of the Haitian people. He has done his work excellently, basing his conclusions on careful observation and research and refraining from unwarranted theorizing and premature solutions of problems. The conclusions are not particularly encouraging but they are not more pessimistic than persons acquainted with Haiti will be prepared for.

To the Catholic Haiti conjures up the spectacle of that long period of well over half a century during which the land was cut off from communication with the Holy See and in consequence the condition of the Church

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there became deplorable. That was the period of Bishop England's mission to Haiti at the behest of the Vatican (an incident to which the author does not allude) and is among the saddest periods in the ecclesiastical history of modern times. However, at least it serves to set in high relief the work accomplished by the French priests and brothers and nuns since the sixties, whose success has been owing largely to the policy they adopted almost as soon as they arrived, namely, to ignore the "Catholicism" they found there and to begin at the beginning by instructing the illiterates in the rudiments of the Faith. That wise practical attitude went far to ensuring the brilliant success which has marked their efforts and fosters hope for a continuance of that success.

The points to which a reviewer of the present book can take exception are few and of slight consequence. Probably the most noteworthy is the assertion (Page 152) that neither Judaism nor Catholicism "nor any other [faith] the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake." The author seems to have overlooked the dancing of "los Seises" in Seville, which continues despite the desire of the Holy See that it be discontinued.

Dr. Leyburn's book is an important contribution in its field, all the more welcome since it deals with the oldest nation, after the United States, in America, the only one that is non-white, and the only one that speaks French. The production of more books of this kind about Haiti, with a corresponding decrease in the "thrillers" too frequently inflicted on us, would speak well for American scholarship.

EDWIN RYAN.

BRIEFERS

Satan in a Top Hat. Tibor Koeves. Alliance. $3.00.

AN EXPERIENCED Hungarian journalist who has little intimate knowledge of Papen, nevertheless makes him the hero of a voluminous book—one of those biographies which read like fiction. Of course Franz von Papen, the Catholic Conservative who tried to outwit Hitler, but became a prisoner of the Führer's line of policy, is nothing satanical. He is a shrewd diplomat and compromiser. Strangely enough Koeves in his hostile biography skips the weakest spot of Papen's career; his cowardly silence about the killing of his closest collaborators, Carl von Bose and Edgar J. Jung in the days of the Roehm putsch. Such a key figure as von Bose is not even mentioned. Edgar Jung is represented as a "young newspaper man." Jung was then in his forties and had never worked for newspapers. Before he became Papen's private secretary, he was a successful lawyer in Munich and the author of a very suggestive book "Die Herrschaft der Minderwertigen" (The Domination of Inferior Men), a poignant criticism of the Weimar republic, which made much impression on Rauschning and other conservatives. When Papen made Jung his secretary, he hired not an unknown young journalist, but perhaps the best pen of the right and one of the few courageous enough to fight the nazis in the open. There are more such omissions and errors.

The Pool of Memory. E. Phillips Oppenheim. Little, Brown. $3.00.

PLEASANT surface reflections on a half century of concocting successful thrillers are disturbed only momentarily by the German invasion of France. Otherwise the author's life seems to have been an unending round of social encounters with European big-wigs and hangers-on. A cocktail party on almost every other page.

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The Inner Forum

Fédération Canadienne des Universitaires Catholiques

SIMULTANEOUSLY at Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec, the Canadian Federation of Catholic University Students held general meetings, February 15. Cardinal Villeneuve opened the Quebec meeting with a brief word of encouragement. Father Albert, O.M. Cap., who delivered the principal address, said in part, "We must translate great principles into thoughts, feelings and action to reach the masses and transform them into a constructive force. In order to exert this influence, we must be competent, expert, each in his own profession. A vigorous specialized culture is necessary if we are to have authority. Furthermore a good general knowledge is essential because those outside our profession judge us on our value as a person. We must know the basic ideas in every question and remember especially to study the psychology of the groups with which we shall come in contact." This according to *Le Carabin* of Quebec.

The Federation was founded in Quebec in 1935, in conjunction with Pax Romana, the international students' organization, by representatives of the Universities of Laval, Montreal and Ottawa. For the first three years it was rather inactive, but in the fall of '38 began preparations for the International Pax Romana Congress held in New York and Washington at the end of the summer of 1939, in which more than 100 Canadian students took part.

In 1940 at Collège St. Laurent near Montreal Pax Romana held a study "week" on the problem of Catholic Action in the university for Canadian and United States delegates. Six Canadian delegates attended the inter-American conference of Pax Romana at Bogota, Colombia, last July, where it was decided that Canada would be the scene of the next meeting. The chief of the Canadian delegation and three Pax Romana directors then made quite an extensive South American tour to establish important contacts in university circles.

Last November the Federation was expanded to include all those who in one way or another participate in the culture of the university. It now includes students from the upper classes of secondary schools, university students and members of the professional classes, so that it is now assured of more continuity and greater permanency.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. M. A. COUTURIER, O.P., editor and artist in stained glass, has been lecturing in Canada and is now visiting in the US.

Dr. Albert A. BRANDT, teacher and radio commentator, is an exile from nazi Germany.

Edwin HONIG is a poet who lives in Washington, D. C.

Vincent ENGELS was formerly associated with THE COMMONWEAL, and is now living in Washington, D. C.

Rev. James G. MURTAGH is an associate editor of the weekly review *Advocate* of Melbourne, Australia, and also national secretary of the Pontifical Mission Aid Society. At present he is studying sociology at the Catholic University of America.

J. G. E. HOPKINS writes short stories and verse and teaches at Notre Dame College of Staten Island.

Rev. Edwin RYAN, D.D., is a member of the faculty of the Catholic University in Washington, where he is professor of South American Church History and executive secretary of the Institute of Ibero-American Studies.

Book Publishers Recommend for Lenten Reading

THE PARABLES OF CHRIST. By Charles J. Callan, O.P., S.T.M. "A treasure house of spiritual reading."—*Catholic World*. "This commentary on the parables stands out as a unique work of Biblical scholarship, a peerless jewel of learning, accessible for the first time in English."—*Emmanuel*. (Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 53 Park Place, N. Y. C.) $3.00

YOUTH GUIDANCE. By Kilian J. Hennrich, O.F.M.Cap. "This is a new book by an old authority on that most important of the 'ologies—Boyology. Fr. Hennrich has well spent his priestly life among youth and for youth. In the course of these profitable decades he has acquired a wealth of experience in the proper guidance of teen-age citizens of the masculine gender."—*America*. (Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 53 Park Place, N. Y. C.) $2.25

WITNESSES TO CHRIST. By Most Rev. Alban Goodier, S.J. The Divine Personality of Christ is the theme, and every chapter contributes to the better understanding and greater appreciation of that Personality.—(P. J. Kenedy & Sons) $2.25

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THE YEAR OF OUR LORD. By Emiliana Loehr, O.S.B. Translated by a Monk of St. Benedict. The aim of this book is to set forth the meaning and spiritual content of the Liturgical year. This object is of immense interest to those souls desirous of becoming more Christlike.—(P. J. Kenedy & Sons) $2.75

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EAST

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